

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of automatically tracking a certificate pedigree comprising:

providing a new user with a piece of hardware containing a predetermined pedigree certificate stored therein, the predetermined pedigree certificate having a level of trust commensurate with a category of hardware of which the provided piece of hardware is a member; and

providing an automated registration arrangement which can only be accessed by users having a piece of hardware containing a predetermined pedigree certificate having a specified level of trust stored therein;

signing a certificate request by the provided piece of hardware using a private key associated with the predetermined pedigree certificate to provide the new user with the individual signature certificate; and

~~wherein, providing upon the new user accessing the automated registration arrangement using the provided piece of hardware, the automated registration arrangement provides the new user with an individual signature certificate from the automated registration arrangement upon the new user accessing the automated registration arrangement using the provided piece of hardware, the individual signature certificate having a level of trust commensurate with that of the pedigree certificate and wherein the automated registration arrangement flags the new user's individual signature certificate with the level of trust of the pedigree certificate in an appropriate storage area.~~

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing the user with at least two pieces of information, wherein, upon the new user accessing the automated registration arrangement, the automated registration arrangement requires the user to provide the at least two pieces of information prior to providing the individual signature certificate to the user.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein one of the at least two pieces of information is provided to the user by the automated registration arrangement in response to the user providing an additional piece of information to the automated registration arrangement.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein one of the at least two pieces of information is provided to the user by a personal registration authority.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein one of the at least two pieces of information is provided to the user by a personal registration authority.

6. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein each of the at least two pieces of information comprises one of either a PIN (Personal Identity Number) or a password.

7-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the provided piece of hardware comprises one of a personal computer or a smart card or a hardware token.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the automated registration arrangement comprises a special registration Web page.

12. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for automatically tracking a certificate pedigree comprising:

a piece of hardware containing a predetermined pedigree certificate stored therein, the predetermined pedigree certificate having a level of trust commensurate with a category of hardware of which the provided piece of hardware is a member; ~~and~~

an automated registration arrangement which can only be accessed by users having a piece of hardware containing a predetermined pedigree certificate having a specified level of trust stored therein;

a private key associated with the predetermined pedigree certificate, the private key being operative to sign a certificate request to provide the new user with an individual signature certificate;

wherein, upon a new user accessing the automated registration arrangement using the piece of hardware, the automated registration arrangement provides the new user with ~~[[an]]~~ the individual signature certificate having a level of trust commensurate with that of the pedigree certificate and wherein the automated registration arrangement flags the new user's individual signature certificate with the level of trust of the pedigree certificate in an appropriate storage area.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising at least two pieces of information, wherein, upon the new user accessing the automated registration arrangement requires the user to provide the at least two pieces of information prior to providing the individual signature certificate to the user.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein one of the at least two pieces of information is provided to the user by the automated registration arrangement in response to the user providing an additional piece of information to the automated registration arrangement.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein one of the at least two pieces of information is provided to the user by a personal registration authority.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein one of the at least two pieces of information is provided to the user by a personal registration authority.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein each of the at least two pieces of information comprises one of either a PIN (Personal Identity Number) or a password.

18-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the piece of hardware comprises one of a personal computer or a smart card or a hardware token.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the automated registration arrangement comprises a special registration Web page.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[23]]1, further comprising validating that the certificate request was signed by the provided piece of hardware by verifying that the private key is associated with the predetermined pedigree certificate contained within the provided piece of hardware.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim [[25]]12, wherein the certificate request is validated by a certification authority by verifying that the private key is associated with the predetermined pedigree certificate contained within the provided piece of hardware.